

May 13, 2010

[Address]

Dear (Lab/Facility Director):

I am writing to ask you to support and promote the technology transfer partnership ombudsman that has been appointed in your laboratory/facility.

The role of the ombudsman is to assist the public and industry in resolving complaints and disputes with National Laboratories or research facilities regarding technology partnerships, patents, and technology licensing. Each DOE National Laboratory and research facility should have appointed a technology partnership ombudsman, as required by the Technology Transfer Commercialization Act of 2000.

In August 2009, the Department of Energy, Office of Inspector General issued a Special Report. The report recommended that the Technology Transfer Coordinator, in conjunction with cognizant program offices, encourage the National Laboratories to “involve the ombudsman in complaint resolution activities where practical and possible.”

In response to this recommendation, DOE management acknowledged that the ombudsman is intended to hear and help resolve complaints from outside organizations regarding the policies and actions of the National Laboratories and that these ombudsman activities are coordinated within DOE by the Office of Conflict Prevention and Resolution. DOE management also proposed in its action plan that we would send a reminder to the Laboratories to ensure that parties making complaints with respect to technology partnerships (including cooperative research and development agreements, patents, and technology licensing) are made aware of the ombudsman and provided with his or her contact information.

In furtherance of this action, I’m asking that you promote the use of the ombudsman’s office and ensure that key staff members in the technology transfer program are using that office, as appropriate. The Director, Office of Conflict Prevention and Resolution (OCPR), maintains a list of the ombudsman for each laboratory or facility on the OCPR website (http://www.gc.energy.gov/ombuds_programs.htm); the website also includes useful background and best practices information regarding ombudsman. I strongly encourage you to make this contact information available to any party that has complaints with respect to technology partnerships. In addition, I ask that you review your own website to ensure that your ombudsman’s contact information is present, accurate, and easily identifiable to any party who may have a complaint with respect to technology partnerships.

If you need additional information or have questions, please contact Kathleen M. Binder, Director, Office of Conflict Prevention and Resolution at 202-586-6972 or kathleen.binder@hq.doe.gov.

Sincerely,
/////Original Signed/////

Karina L. Edmonds, Ph.D.
DOE Technology Transfer Coordinator